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71° | 54°	78° | 60°	75° | 51°	70° | 54°	72° | 52°
Scattered showers	Mostly sunny	Chance showers	Chance showers	Chance showers, mostly cloudy

Bombs kill more than 200 in Sri Lankan churches, hotels on Easter Sunday

At least 27 of the dead were foreigners, including several Americans.

REUTERS

More than 200 people were killed and at least 450 injured in bomb blasts that ripped through churches and luxury hotels in Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday, the first major attack on the Indian Ocean island since the end of a civil war 10 years ago.

Seven people were arrested and three police officers were killed during a security forces raid on a house in the Sri Lankan capital several hours after the attacks, many of which officials said were suicide bomb explosions.

The government declared a curfew in Colombo and blocked access to social media and messaging sites, including Facebook and WhatsApp. It was unclear when the curfew would be lifted.

"Altogether, we have information of 207 dead from all hospitals. According to the information as of now we have 450 injured people admitted to hospitals," police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera told reporters.

Three churches in various parts of the country and four hotels in Colombo were hit. At least 27 of the dead were foreigners, including five British people, two of whom had dual U.S. citizenship, and three Indians, according to officials in those countries.

Also among the fatalities were three people from Denmark, two from Turkey, and one from Portugal, officials said. There were also Chinese and Dutch among the dead, according to media reports.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said U.S. nationals were among those killed, but did not give details.

President Donald Trump said America offered "heartfelt condolences" to the Sri Lankan people and stood ready to help.

There were 25 unidentified bodies, believed to be of foreigners, at the Colombo Judicial Medical Officer's mortuary, Sri Lanka's foreign ministry said.

PRIOR INFORMATION

There were no immediate claims of responsibility for the attacks in a country which was at war for decades with Tamil separatists until 2009, a time when bomb blasts in the capital were common.

Prime Minister Ranil Wickremsinghe acknowledged that the government had some "prior information of the attack," though ministers were not told.

He said there wasn't an adequate response and there needed to be an inquiry into how the information was used.

He also said the government needs to look at the international links of a local militant group.

Agence France Presse reported that it had seen documents showing that Sri Lanka's police chief Pujuth Jayasundara issued an intelligence alert to top officers 10 days ago, warning that suicide bombers planned to hit "prominent churches." He cited a foreign intelligence service as reporting that a little-known Islamist group was planning attacks.

A Sri Lanka police spokesman said he was not aware of the intelligence report.

Local Christian groups have said they faced increasing intimidation from some extremist Buddhist monks in recent years. Last year, there were clashes between the majority Sinhalese Buddhist community and minority Muslims, with some hardline Buddhist groups accusing Muslims of forcing people to convert to Islam.

Dozens were killed in one of the blasts at St. Sebastian's Gothic-style Catholic church in Katuwapitiya, north of Colombo. Gunasekera said the police suspected a suicide attack there. Pictures from the site showed bodies on the ground, blood on the church pews and a destroyed roof.

Local media reported 25 people were also killed in an attack on an evangelical church in Batticaloa in Eastern Province. REUTERS

British pop singer Adele separates from husband

2 British pop singer Adele and her husband have separated, her representatives said over the weekend. One of the most successful singer-songwriters of all time, Adele and water charity executive Simon Konecki met in 2011. They had a son a year later, and married in 2016. "Adele and her partner have separated. They are committed to raising their son together lovingly. As always they ask for privacy. There will be no further comment," a spokesman for Adele said in a statement. Adele Adkins, 30, shot to fame in 2008 with her debut album "19," lauded for its combination of soulful vocals and confessional lyrics. Her last album, "25," released in 2015, broke U.S. and British records by becoming the fastest-selling album of all time. She became the first person in the history of the Grammy awards to win the top three awards twice. REUTERS

Queen celebrates 93rd birthday at Easter service

3 Britain's Queen Elizabeth, the world's oldest and longest reigning living monarch, celebrated her 93rd birthday on Sunday by attending the traditional Easter service at Windsor Castle. Elizabeth was accompanied by members of her family, including grandsons Prince William and Prince Harry, and William's wife Catherine, at the Easter Mattins service in St George's Chapel. Prince Harry's wife Meghan Markle, who is due to give birth to the couple's first child imminently, did not attend. The couple, who were married at the chapel in May 2018, posted a birthday greeting to Elizabeth on their official Instagram account. "Happy Birthday Your Majesty, Ma'am, Granny. Wishing you the most wonderful day! Harry & Meghan," they wrote. Elizabeth was born on April 21, 1926, in Bruton Street, central London and became queen in 1952 at the age of 25. REUTERS

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Philly illustrator to paint the town green at NYC Earth Day festival

Molly Egan will create art during a live installation in NYC's Union Square.

MORGAN ROUSSEAU
morgan@metro.us

Philadelphia-based artist Molly Egan is heading to New York City's Union Square next week to participate in a live art installation that is meant to inspire people to live greener lives.

Egan is one of seven artists who will create artwork at the annual Earth Day event, which is being held on Tuesday, a day after the holiday. She recently explained to Metro what inspired her to showcase her talents for the greater, greener good.

Metro: What drew you to participate in Tuesday's Earth Day Initiative event?

Egan: I was excited to be contacted by John Oppermann, the executive director of Earth Day Initiative, to participate in the event. In my home and studio, I try to make decisions to positively impact the environment wherever possible. I'm always thrilled when, as an illustrator, I can connect something I'm passionate about in my daily life to an image I can create.

What can people expect from your work on Tuesday? What is the inspiration behind the artwork?

All of the artists participating will be working on large 5-by-6-foot canvases and focusing on a different theme. In my piece for the event, I'll be exploring the idea of green living. To show how living a more sustainable lifestyle can be accessible to all of us, I plan to show people doing a variety of environmentally friendly activities. For city dwellers, a great start is to bike, walk or use public transportation rather than relying on your own vehicle or ride-shares. I'll also be depicting people making more sustainable choices like recycling, composting, replacing plastic water bottles with reusable ones and eating more environmentally friendly foods. I'm excited to use bright colors, pattern and stylized people as a way to explore an important concept.

How do you hope Tuesday's event will impact people? Do you think it will inspire change?

I hope that New Yorkers and visitors to the city enjoy the event and are inspired to make small changes in their lives to live more sustainably. I think it's always exciting to have events where it will not only be fun and inviting, but also encourage people to learn something new.

If you go:

Tuesday's event is free and open to the public and will be held rain or shine. The festival runs from noon until 6:30 p.m., and will feature dozens of exhibits by environmental nonprofits and green businesses as well as kids' activities and performances. The annual gathering is considered the most high-traffic Earth Day event in the nation. This year, organizers are launching a one-year countdown to the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, which began in 1970.

Metro is proud to be Earth Day Initiative's exclusive newspaper partner. Visit dojust1thing.org to learn how you can help build a more sustainable future.

Molly Egan. COURTESY MOLLY EGAN

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COURTESY JUST SALAD

Just Salad aims to reduce takeout food waste with new programs

Known for its reusable bowls, the quick-service chain is launching several initiatives to lighten area landfills.

MICHAEL MARTIN
letters@metro.us

Grabbing a salad for lunch used to be the ultimate guilt-free choice. But amid recent headlines about the plastic-waste crisis and the limitations of recycling, it's become less of a feel-good meal. There are those disposable plastic bowls. And plastic lids. And plastic forks. So much plastic, Burger King's paper wrappers might seem preferable.

But Just Salad is aiming to return the takeout salad to the realm of the totally virtuous, with a sweeping focus on sustainability that's unusual for restaurants of any size. In the past few months, the fast-casual chain has expanded its reusable-bowl program, set a zero-waste goal, planned the rollout of a composting program and created an innovative executive job whose remit is to reduce the company's environmental impact.

"The nature of a quick-service restaurant is that you have a lot of carry-out traffic, and a lot of disposable items," said Janani Lee, Just Salad's first chief sustainability officer, who was promoted in December from director of its supply chain. "We've been at the forefront of sustainability with our reusable bowl program, and we're building on that to reduce waste even further."

The goals are ambitious: Just Salad aims to be zero-waste by 2022. They're developing a compostable takeout bowl and looking at ways to reduce utensil discards. Ingredients are going under the microscope to see if they can be made more sustainable. A composting program for kitchen waste, piloted this spring in one location, will roll out to every New York City restaurant by the end of the year.

Customer acceptance may have encouraged that accelerated schedule. The chain's reusable-bowl program has been a hit: About 25 percent of customers participate. (The $1 bowls entitle purchasers to free toppings at each visit; their popularity has reduced landfill-bound plastic by about 75,000 pounds a year.) "It shows our guests really care about sustainability — that they would come to us with a reusable bowl rather than go anywhere else," said Lee.

75K

The $1 bowls entitle purchasers to free toppings at each visit; their popularity has reduced landfill-bound plastic by 75,000 pounds annually.

The company will next focus on those plastic utensils. Lee is exploring a reusable fork program, along with buying utensils made from alternative polymers. "We really want us to look at all of the plastics that we could have an impact on," she said. "So we were looking at bioplastic alternatives for people who need an option. For people who are taking their salads back to the office or home, we're encouraging them to use a reusable metal or plastic fork. And we're planning to pilot a reusable fork that customers can buy at our stores."

This Earth Day, each Just Salad location will give away 100 reusable bowls, first come, first served. The chain is also selling a sustainability kit, which includes a "VIP" reusable bowl, S'well water bottle and tote bag for $39. That price also includes an immeasurable perk for any New Yorker at lunchtime: The ability to skip the line.

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Larry Hopkins. REUTERS

FBI arrests leader of armed group stopping migrants in New Mexico

Larry Hopkins is the "national commander" of the United Constitutional Patriots.

The FBI on Saturday said it had arrested Larry Hopkins, the leader of an armed group that is stopping undocumented migrants after they cross the U.S.–Mexico border into New Mexico.

The arrest came two days after the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) accused the group of illegally detaining migrants and New Mexico's Democratic Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham ordered an investigation.

Hopkins, 69, also known as Johnny Horton, was arrested in Sunland Park, New Mexico, on a federal complaint charging him with being a felon in possession of firearms and ammunition, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said in a statement.

"We're not worried about it, he's going to be cleared," said Jim Benvie, a spokesman for the United Constitutional Patriots (UCP), blaming his arrest on political pressure from Lujan Grisham.

Hopkins is the "national commander" of the UCP, which has had around half a dozen members camped out on a rotating basis near Sunland Park since late February.

PATRIOTS OR FASCISTS?

The UCP describes itself as a "patriot group" helping U.S. Border Patrol cope with record numbers of Central American families crossing the border to seek asylum.

Dressed in camouflage and carrying rifles, UCP members have helped U.S. Border Patrol detain over 5,600 migrants in the last two months, Benvie said. Videos posted online by the group show members telling migrants to stop, sit down, and wait for agents to arrive. Critics accuse the UCP of impersonating law enforcement.

Crowdfunding sites PayPal and GoFundMe on Friday barred the group, citing policies not to promote hate or violence, after the ACLU called the UCP a "fascist militia."

"Today's arrest by the FBI indicates clearly that the rule of law should be in the hands of trained law enforcement officials, not armed vigilantes," New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas said in a statement of Hopkins's arrest.

Hopkins was previously arrested in Oregon in 2006 on suspicion of impersonating a police officer and being a felon in possession of a firearm, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center.

NO STANDOFFS

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) said in a statement it did not support citizens taking law enforcement into their own hands and instead encouraged the public to be its eyes and ears on the border.

Benvie said the UCP was doing just that and had the support of local Border Patrol and police.

Mostly military veterans, UCP members carry weapons for self-defense and at no time pointed guns at migrants, as they have been accused of, Benvie said.

Despite having funding sources cut off, Benvie said the group's online support had swelled since it came under attack this week. Its Facebook followers have more than doubled since Thursday.

Asked what the group would do if told to leave by state police, Benvie said they would probably go and, if they felt the order violated their constitutional rights, sue the state of New Mexico. REUTERS

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Top Democrats leave open option of Trump impeachment after Mueller report

REUTERS

Top congressional Democrats left the door open on Sunday to the impeachment of President Donald Trump, but said they would first need to complete their own investigations into whether he obstructed justice in Special Counsel Robert Mueller's Russia probe.

Some party leaders have cautioned against impeachment just 18 months before the 2020 presidential election, although prominent liberals have demanded the start of proceedings to remove Trump from office since the release on Thursday of Mueller's report.

U.S. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler, whose panel would spearhead any impeachment proceedings, said Democrats would press ahead with investigations of Trump in Congress and "see where the facts lead us."

"Obstruction of justice, if proven, would be impeachable," Nadler said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

A redacted version of Mueller's long-awaited report on Russian interference in the 2016 election, the product of a 22-month investigation, outlined multiple instances where Trump tried to thwart the probe. While it stopped short of concluding Trump had committed a crime, it did not exonerate him.

Mueller noted that Congress has the power to address whether Trump violated the law, and Democrats said it would be a matter of discussion in the coming weeks.

"That's going to be a very consequential decision and one I'm going to reserve judgment on until we have a chance to fully deliberate on it," House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff said on "Fox News Sunday."

> **"That's going to be a very consequential decision and one I'm going to reserve judgment on until we have a chance to fully deliberate on it."**
>
> **House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff**

Nadler has issued a subpoena to the Justice Department to hand over the full Mueller report by May 1, although the Justice Department called the request "premature and unnecessary."

Before drawing any conclusions, Nadler said, Democrats would want to see those materials and hear from Mueller and Attorney General William Barr, who is scheduled to testify in early May. Nadler also said he would call former White House counsel Donald McGahn to testify.

Republicans have stood by Trump, and Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi cautioned against an impeachment effort that would have no chance of success in the Republican-led Senate.

U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren became the first major contender for the Democratic 2020 presidential nomination to call for the start of impeachment, saying on Friday that "the severity of this misconduct" demanded it. REUTERS

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ACCEPTING TRANSFERS

New delivery service Loop makes a stylish case for reusable containers

Debuting next month, the "circular shopping platform" aims to make reuse as popular as recycling.

MICHAEL MARTIN
letters@metro.us

What if you combined Amazon Prime with a 1950s milkman and Target's democratic design?

That pitch might make the judges on "Shark Tank" scratch their heads, but it's the exact premise of a grocery delivery service that will debut in the Northeast next month, with potentially revolutionary implications for sustainability and the environment.

On May 21, Loop will launch a "circular shopping platform" at loopstore.com. It will stock hundreds of familiar branded products — including condiments, ice cream and personal-care items — in durable, reusable packaging instead of single-use bottles, boxes and cans. Customers subscribe to the service and place orders that arrive via UPS; after the products are used up, Loop circles back to pick up the empties at no charge, then cleans and sanitizes them for reuse. Replenishments are automatically delivered.

It's the brainstorm of TerraCycle, a company founded in 2001 to recycle previously unrecyclable materials. The overarching concept is the circular economy: Instead of "make and dispose," the goal is "reuse and eliminate." Materials are used for as long as possible, then recycled or reused, with the goal of creating zero waste.

> **"It's funny. Most of the things we buy, we don't really want to."**
> Tom Szaky, CEO, TerraCycle
> TerraCycle

"It's funny. Most of the things we buy, we don't

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really want to," said TerraCycle CEO Tom Szaky. "When you go to, say, Starbucks and you buy a cup of coffee, you buy the coffee, but the cup is also in the price, and you own the cup. But do you really want to own it in the end? If we change ownership — instead of having the consumer own the package, the manufacturer owns it — the manufacturer is motivated to move away from making a product as cheap as possible to making it as durable as possible."

To kick off the service, Loop partnered with some of the world's biggest manufacturers of grocery items, including Procter & Gamble, Nestlé and Unilever. Brands available at launch will include Pantene, Tide, Crest, Gillette, Pampers, Always, Dove, Seventh Generation and Hellmann's. The reusable containers are made from innovative polymers and metals that are stylish and functional: Häagen-Dazs ice cream arrives in a stainless-steel, double-walled container that's warm to the touch but frozen inside; Axe deodorant comes in a container that looks designed by Apple.

"The design level is a whole new departure from anything in disposable," said Szaky.

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				4				7

MEDIUM

	8	3		9	6			
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				1		4		
3			7					5
				4		5		7
4			2	8			3	
	9			3				

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READER WRITE-INS:

NO MORE CURSIVE WRITING IN SCHOOLS

Lately I have encountered several people, mostly late-teens and younger, who do not know how to read or write in cursive. I was told that they are not taught how to write in cursive anymore in school. What kind of signature will this promote? E-signature? Students are writing like they text: no punctuation, incorrect spelling and acronyms are the shortcuts used to get the message across. Cursive writing has been around for centuries. This penmanship SHOULD NOT be considered obsolete and by all means should continue to be taught in school.

— **Robbyn Johnson,** *Metro US reader*

ISTOCK

metro.us/horoscopes

Aries Step up and make things happen. Effect changes that will put you in a better position to present what you have to offer. Pay closer attention to health and personal finances.

Taurus Aim high and don't stop until you reach your destination. A financial opportunity looks promising, as long as you don't go overboard and invest too much.

Gemini Put your energy to good use. Lend a helping hand or nurture an important relationship. As long as you are positive and willing to compromise, you will meet with no resistance.

Cancer A change or adjustment may need to be made for you to avoid being taken for granted. A confrontation may not bring the results you want, but using reason will.

Leo If you want to find out what's happening or how something is done, go directly to the source and ask questions.

Virgo Take a course or attend a function that will bring you in contact with industry peers. Networking events will lead to opportunities.

Libra Get physical, make personal improvements and take better care of your emotional, physical and mental health. Share feelings and build a stronger relationship with a loved one.

Scorpio Don't feel pressured to make a change just because someone else does. You are better off doing your own thing. A joint venture will not turn out as planned.

Sagittarius If you want something, go after it. It's OK to be aggressive, as long as you don't upset someone in the process. Get permission and forge ahead.

Capricorn Be private about your activities until you have everything in place and are fully prepared to present what you have to offer.

Aquarius Stop dreaming and start doing. Clear out clutter and make space for something you want to pursue. Your enthusiasm will encourage others to help you reach your goal.

Pisces Put your energy into things you can actually accomplish. Be honest and realistic when it comes to what you are capable of doing and how to go about it. Personal improvement is encouraged. EUGENIA LAST

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Green is the new black

Here's how Philly is supporting Earth Day 2019.

PAT KING
patrick.king@metro.us

April 22 marks an important day for our planet — Earth Day. Earth Day is a worldwide event that aims to support and educate people on environmental protection. This important day of observance has been around for almost five decades and every year, people around the globe partake in cleanups, seminars and other green happenings to help protect and support the planet. If you're wondering what you can do this year for Earth Day 2019 in Philly, we've got you covered.

Single Prop Rum's Earth Day happenings
Single Prop Rum will be donating $1 for every bottle sold from April 22 to April 28 to EarthShare, a network of sustainable nonprofits dedicated to protecting our planet. Philadelphians can pick up a bottle at select Pennsylvania Fine Wine & Good Spirits stores.
April 22-28, Various locations, singleproprum.com

Keep Philadelphia Beautiful's Earth Day cleanup
Keep Philadelphia Beautiful and other local partners are heading to Smith Playground and the blocks surrounding the park this Monday to help clean up litter and debris to beautify the neighborhood. Volunteers who join in will be assisting KPB and can also partake in cleanup competitions, recycling education and a brief walking tour of the park's Soak It Up Adoption green stormwater system, led by Philadelphia Water. You can volunteer through the official Facebook event. Exact meeting location details will be shared in a pre-cleanup email.
April 22, 10 a.m.-12:15 p.m., Smith Playground, 2100 S. 24th St.

"Dominion" film screening
Head to Temple University this Monday to view a special screening of the 2018 documentary "Dominion" and join in on a post-film discussion with Dr. Thomas Berendt. According to the release, "Dominion" exposes the dark underbelly of modern animal agriculture through drones, hidden cameras and handheld cameras as it explores the morality and validity of our dominion over the animal kingdom. The objective of the screening is to showcase how being kind to fellow earthlings can provide us all a better experience on this planet. Delicious refreshments from Batter & Crumbs will be provided during the event.
April 22, 6-9 p.m., Temple University, 1801 N. Broad St., temple.edu

Earth Day at Cedar Point Bar and Kitchen
Head to Cedar Point Bar and Kitchen on April 22 to enjoy some of their Earth Day-inspired fare and join in on a plant swap. The plant swap will take place from noon to 6 p.m. and guests can bring a plant or seedling and pick up a plant or seedling while there. The Earth Day-inspired menu includes Kombucha by Funky Fresh Ferments made for Cedar Point, avocado pudding and Popeye burgers.
April 22, noon-6 p.m., Cedar Point Bar and Kitchen, 2370 E. Norris St., cedarpointbarandkitchen.com

Weaver's Way Earth Day happenings
Weaver's Way, Philly's oldest and largest grocery co-op, is all about helping out the planet. Weaver's seeks out farmers, vendors and suppliers that source humanely raised meats and nutritious food that is made with fair labor and produces the smallest possible carbon footprint. The co-op is offering a special Earth Day event on April 24 with their "Weigh It Wednesday" program. Any shopper who brings their own containers and bags to shop the bulk section will receive an additional 10 percent off all bulk goods. The goal is not just to shop bulk but to encourage a culture that takes it one step further.
April 24, Weaver's Way, various locations in Mt. Airy, Chestnut Hill and Ambler, weaversway.coop

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Fun things to do in Philly this week

Test your Disney knowledge, indulge in a unique happy hour and more.

MOLLY GIVEN
Molly.Given@metro.us

Looking for some fun and unique things to do in Philly this week? We've got you covered. Here are five fun things to do this week in Philly.

Bluebird Distilling's Happy Hour
Bluebird Distilling's new happy hour will be available from 4 to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, and will feature $9 classic cocktails, a $3 off rotating weekly cocktail and $1 off all wine and draft beer. Bar Director Matt Giarratano has come up with some new spring cocktails, including his creative twist on the Hemingway Daiquiri, for the occasion. As a bonus, also starting on Monday guests can sample Bluebird Distilling's award-winning grain-to-glass spirits with the addition of spirit flights. Guests will receive six quarter-ounce pours for $10. *The Bourse Food Hall, 111 S. Independence Mall East, theboursephilly.com*

Beauty Blitz
Head to the Market Shops at Comcast this Tuesday to join in on the Beauty Blitz. Philadelphians are invited to freshen up their beauty routine with beauty experts at this exciting event. Indulge in a nail bar by Lacquer Lounge, makeup demos by Cheekadee Makeup plus beauty demos by L'Oreal USA's La Roche-Posay and CerVe, CocoKitty Beauty and Franklin & Whitman. *5-7 p.m., Market & Shops at Comcast Center, 1701 John F Kennedy Blvd. #300, $5, themarketandshopsatcomcastcenter.com*

Disney Quizzo
Think you know everything there is about Disney? Here's your chance to test out that knowledge. Head to City Tap on Thursday to go head-to-head with other quizzo teams and see who truly is the ultimate Disney master. The quizzo will cover everything from "The Lion King" to "Frozen" — no Disney stone will go unturned. First place will win a $100 City Tap House gift card, runner-up will receive a $25 City Tap House gift card. The team with the best name earns a round on the house and the team with best costumes will also earn a round on the house. *9 p.m.-midnight, 3925 Walnut St., 2nd floor, citytap.com*

The delicious surf and turf meal from Square 1682. PUNCH MEDIA

Surf and Turf Tuesday
This mouthwatering special will be running throughout the spring and summer every Tuesday at Square 1682. Indulge in a juicy, 10-ounce Angus Ribeye, half-grilled Maine lobster, crushed fingerling potatoes, charred lime, roasted garlic, drawn herb butter and chimichurri sauce for just $25 at the Center city hot spot to truly make your week special. The best part? You can also get a refreshing beer for only $3 with your surf and turf meal. Surf and turf lovers wishing to snag a seat and feast on this delicious meal can call ahead and secure a table by calling 215-563-5008. *Every Tuesday, reservations available, Square 1682, 121 S. 17th St., $25, square1682.com*

Tarot Gardens
Join Atlas Obscura Society Philadelphia for this unique and fun event surrounding tarot cards at Philadelphia's Magic Gardens. Local Healing Artist Alexandra Kurowski will be leading the class and will teach a simple method of connecting with the imagery to divine your own meaning. Guests are encouraged to bring their own deck of tarot cards if they wish. Participants will also explore the process of creating a deck with Grace Duong, whose own journey to understand the tarot lead to the creation of her "Mystic Mondays" deck. *April 24, 6:30-9:30 p.m., Philadelphia's Magic Gardens, 1020 South St., $35, phillymagicgardens.org*

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The last straw

Bananas Smoothies & Frozen Yogurt has found a unique alternative to plastic straws.

MOLLY GIVEN
Molly.Given@metro.us

The carrot straw from Bananas Smoothies & Frozen Yogurt. PROVIDED

Earth Day is here and many businesses are vowing to try and make their establishments more green to help support the sustainability of our planet. One of those spots is Bananas Smoothies & Frozen Yogurt. The quick-service brand is known for serving real-fruit smoothies in multiple locations nationwide, and now they have made an exciting announcement regarding their use of plastic straws.

The smoothie hot spot recently made it public that they will be implementing carrot straws in their smoothies and freshly squeezed juices. According to the official release, there are nearly 7.5 million plastic straws lying around America's shorelines. These straws are damaging not only aquatic life nationwide, but are also polluting America's natural resources, causing long-lasting damage to the country.

Bananas Smoothies & Frozen Yogurt wanted to find a sustainable alternative to plastic straws rather than eliminate them altogether.

"As I'm sure everyone is well aware, plastic straws are one of the world's top polluters, damaging our national resources irreparably," said Andrew Steinberg, chief operating officer of Villa Restaurant Group, in the release. "At Bananas Smoothies & Frozen Yogurt, we feel for the sea turtles and all our ocean creatures. As such, we wanted to begin thinking about an alternative to the simple plastic straw we use so often in smoothie and juice consumption. We've started testing a prototype for a carrot straw in the hopes that one day we may be able to serve all our nutritious juices, smoothies and more with a healthy, edible and ultimately environmentally friendly straw option nationwide."

At this time, Bananas Smoothies & Frozen Yogurt is still in the testing and planning phase with the production design.

For more information, visit greenleafsbananas.com or visit the company's Instagram @greenleafsbananas.

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'Curse of La Llorona' wins worst Easter weekend in over a decade

"Shazam!" dropped to second place in its third weekend.

Warner Bros. and New Line's "The Curse of La Llorona" ascended to the top of domestic box office charts, conjuring $26.5 million when it opened in 3,372 North American theaters.

"La Llorona" is the latest horror movie to outperform expectations, further cementing the genre as a reliable box office draw. Even so, "La Llorona" and other new releases "Breakthrough" and "Penguins" couldn't salvage movie theaters from suffering the worst Easter weekend showing in almost 15 years. This weekend's offerings amassed $112 million in ticket sales, the lowest haul since 2005, according to Comscore. The decline in sales is likely because the rest of Hollywood avoided opening a big movie ahead of Disney and Marvel's "Avengers: Endgame," which is expected to crush records when it debuts on April 26.

"La Llorona" also debuted in 71 international markets, where it collected $30 million for a global start of $56.5 million. The supernatural thriller, set in the "Conjuring" universe, cost $9 million to produce. The film is based on the Mexican folklore about the Weeping Woman, a figure who lost her children and causes misfortune to those nearby. James Wan, known for his work on "Aquaman," "The Conjuring" and "Saw," served as a producer.

Warner Bros. and New Line claimed the top two spots at the box office as last weekend's champ "Shazam!" dropped to second place. The comic-book adventure added another $17 million in its third weekend of release, taking ticket sales to $121 million at the domestic market.

"Breakthrough," a faith-based film about a parent's unwavering love for their children, debuted at No. 3, generating $11 million over the weekend and $14 million during its first five days of release. That's a solid start for "Breakthrough," Disney's first Fox release since the $71 billion merger, since the film cost $14 million to produce.

"Roxann Dawson, DeVon Franklin, and the Fox 2000 team have delivered a wonderfully crafted, deeply emotional film that we're thrilled to see resonating with audiences," said Cathleen Taff, Disney's president of global distribution. "And with excellent reviews and word of mouth, we expect a healthy run ahead."

Overseas, "Breakthrough" earned $5.9 million for a global start of $20.5 million. "Breakthrough" stars "This Is Us" actress Chrissy Metz as a mother who refuses to give up hope after her adopted son suffers a near-fatal fall through an icy lake. Roxann Dawson directed the movie, which was produced by DeVon Franklin ("Miracles from Heaven," "Heaven Is for Real,") and executive produced by NBA star Stephen Curry. REUTERS

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Sixers in driver's seat after emotional Game 4 win over Nets

Mike Scott's heroics put the 76ers up 3-1 in their series against the Nets.

JOE PANTORNO
joseph.pantorno@metro.us

Mike Scott (right) hit the game-winning 3-pointer in the 76ers' 112-108 Game 4 win over the Nets. GETTY IMAGES

It wasn't Joel Embiid, it wasn't JJ Redick, it wasn't Tobias Harris, and it would have been illegal if it was Ben Simmons.

No, the hero of the 76ers' Game 4 victory over the Brooklyn Nets was Mike Scott, the reserve power forward who is known to be more of an enforcer of sorts rather than a stone-cold marksman from deep.

That's a foreign concept, especially in a playoff game when the gloves came off.

With 7:42 left in the third quarter, star center Joel Embiid administered a hard foul to Nets big man Jarrett Allen. Brooklyn veteran forward Jared Dudley, who didn't appreciate the contact, pushed Embiid before being met by Butler as the heated mosh pit shifted under the basket and into the crowd momentarily.

Dudley and Butler — the 76ers' go-to guy in crunch time — were thrown out of the game, while Embiid was hit with a Flagrant 1.

"I for sure fed off of that," Embiid said. "The fact that [Butler] had my back... that was great to see. You know Mike [Scott] has kind of been doing that all season. I'm sure if he was on the court and then someone would've pushed me, he's always tenacious and has our back. Tonight it was Jimmy, so it's great to see that."

Embiid certainly did feed off that, putting up a monster Game 4 after sitting out the previous tilt in Brooklyn as he continues to deal with tendinitis in his left knee.

The center poured in 31 points with 16 rebounds, seven assists and five blocks in 31 minutes of action. He became just the sixth player in NBA history to put up a 30-15-5-5 statline in a playoff game, joining Elton Brand, Tim Duncan, Patrick Ewing, Ralph Sampson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

With Butler ejected, it was Scott who made the big shot, even if he wasn't the first option. The 30-year-old, who appeared in 27 games with the 76ers this year after being acquired from the Los Angeles Clippers in the Tobias Harris deal, hit a corner three with 19.7 seconds left to play in the game with the Sixers trailing, 108-107.

It proved to be the game-winner as the Sixers took a commanding 3-1 series lead, taking both games in Brooklyn.

"My job was just to space the floor and be a decoy. Tobias [Harris] tried to get it to [Embiid] and I think the pass got deflected," Scott said. "Jo made a hell of a hustle play, saw me in the corner ... cashed out."

The Sixers have an opportunity to cash out of the first round and eliminate the Nets in Game 5 as they return to Philadelphia on Tuesday night.

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Eagles schedule: Loving that Week 1 line

The Birds' schedule was released last week.

GLEN MACNOW

Glen Macnow is a renowned sports talk radio voice in Philadelphia on WIP. He is the host of the Eagles official pregame show.

MIKE GREGOR

I don't usually bet on NFL games more than five months before they occur. We haven't even gotten to the draft yet, let alone the preseason. Guys get injured, or benched, or — well, you get the point. Too much uncertainty.

But I'm confident enough now that I'm taking a few dollars to the sportsbook this week and placing it on the Eagles to cover the 8.5-point spread in their Sept. 8 home opener against Washington.

Overall, the schedule-maker did the Birds no favors, handing them a three-game road trip as well as their annual Thursday night road game, this year in Green Bay. But a home opener against the Skins? That's almost like a first-week bye.

Count on Washington to be the division's doormat this season. With Alex Smith out (perhaps forever), the Skins are expected to start Colt McCoy or Case Keenum at quarterback. McCoy brings a 7-20 career record into the new season. And the last time we saw Keenum, he coughed up three turnovers for Minnesota in the 2017 NFC title game.

There's a chance Washington may trade for Arizona's Josh Rosen or draft a QB this week. Either way, the new guy should be overmatched by the Eagles' veteran defense.

The Redskins spent their offseason overpaying for safety Landon Collins and signing tackle Ereck Flowers, a first-round bust for the Giants. Meanwhile, they lost solid LB Preston Smith, WR Jamison Crowder and several other starters from an already thin roster.

In short, it's going to be a rough season for head coach Jay Gruden.

The Eagles had a solid offseason, adding WR DeSean Jackson and RB Jordan Howard as weapons, and bringing defensive line depth with DT Malik Jackson and DE Vinny Curry. They'll be a contender again.

Look, 8.5 points is a big number – the largest early spread of the NFL's opening week. But the Eagles crushed Washington the past two seasons, winning the four contests by an average score of 29-13.

There's nothing to suggest this next game should be more challenging.

I've always believed it's best in the NFL to play your weak opponents early, especially at home. In part this is to gain momentum. In part it's because other teams projected to be strong may be destroyed by injury or other factors by the time you play them later in the season.

Looking at things now, the opener against the burgundy and gold looks like the most lopsided affair of the season, edging out October games against the Jets and Bills. An 8.5-point spread? I'll gladly lay that.

TWEET OF THE DAY

Glen Macnow
@RealGlenMacnow

No idea what's wrong with Aaron Nola, but any hopes the Phils have this season depend on him getting it together.

Best Bets

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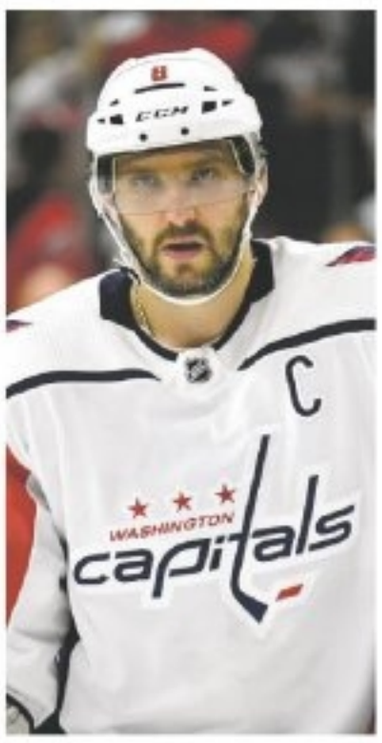
Washington Capitals vs. Carolina Hurricanes



GETTY IMAGES

Washington has posted a 7-2 record in its last nine first-round playoff games and has gone an excellent 7-3 in its last 10 games on the road. The Hurricanes, on the other hand, have struggled a bit in the spot they are in here tonight as they have gone just 1-5 in their last six games where they have faced a team with a winning record. They are also just 2-5 coming off a game where they scored two goals or less. Throw in the fact that the Caps have won 19 of the last 27 head-to-head meetings between the two teams and we're taking them at the pick-em (or so) price to get the road win and close out the series in Raleigh on Monday night.

THE PICK:
Capitals +110

Sports betting 101: How to bet on baseball

Betting on baseball continues to grow quickly and is expected to be a $1.5 billion regulated betting market for the 2019 season. The main reason why betting on baseball is becoming popular is the vast frequency of regular-season games (2430 in MLB vs. 256 in the NFL).

There are a variety of bets available to make on a baseball game, but backing a team on the moneyline is the easiest baseball bet to understand as you simply pick one team to win.

In each MLB game there is a favorite and an underdog. The favorite is the team that the oddsmakers project to win. Their odds are represented by a minus sign

followed by a three-digit number (Phillies -150). The underdog is the team the oddsmakers project to lose and their team odds are represented by a plus sign followed by a three-digit number (Mets +130).

Here's how the betting works in this example. Bet/risk $150 on Phillies (the favorite) to win $100 or bet/risk $100 on the Mets (the underdog) to win $130.

The sportsbook oddsmaker uses a variety of data and stats to set the line, however baseball odds are predominately determined by the starting pitchers.

For instance, when a pitcher like the Phillies' Aaron Nola (with a record of 17-6 in the 2018 season) is the starting pitcher, the Phillies will most often be the favorite.

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Breaking down the NL East

GETTY IMAGES

This Phillies–Mets series is a big one.

VSiN

As the Mets open a three-game series tonight at Citi Field against the Phillies, it's clear that what happens "inside" the National League East amongst contenders is going to loom very large in the playoff chase.

We can throw out the Miami Marlins. Everyone expected them to be terrible. They were terrible out of the gate. That leaves handicappers and bettors with four teams to focus on:

Atlanta: Last year's NL East champion with a 90-72 record

Philadelphia: This year's favorite after acquiring Bryce Harper

New York: Young talent with explosive potential

Washington: Capable of regaining divisional dominance

Major League schedules are division-heavy, making every victory important because it also inflicts a loss on a close competitor. Let's see who's been inflicting the most losses on each other amongst the four teams who matter. The following are win-loss records only in games Atlanta, Philadelphia, New York and Washington have played against each other.

Four-way free-for-all: Philadelphia 7-4, Washington 6-5, New York 6-7, Atlanta 2-5.

That might look like bad news for Mets fans at first glance. But, it should be noted that only three of those 13 games were at Citi Field. Going 6-7 against a 3-10 schedule split is a good sign, not a bad one.

Should Phillies fans be confident about that 7-4 start? Maybe not! Nine of those 11 games were at home.

That's why this current Phillies/Mets series is so important for getting a handicapping read. If the Phillies take at least two of three, it's easier to see them as the superior side. But, if the Mets impress, they may be sitting atop the division when the home/road split finally equalizes. Keeping your head above water when 16 of your first 21 overall games are on the road means you'll probably be swimming much faster in a friendlier current.

VSiN will keep an eye on NL East action until firmer conclusions can be drawn for fans and bettors.

Here's a quick recap of what happened last week when these teams met in Philly.

***April 15: Mets (+105) 7, Phillies 6 (in 11 innings)**

***April 16: Phillies (-115) 14, Mets 3**

***April 17: Phillies (-110) 3, Mets 2**

Notice how betting markets perceived these teams as very evenly matched. Playing at home, the Phillies were just -125, -115, and -110. Oddsmakers and sharps are already giving the Mets a lot of respect. Let's see if that continues this week.

JEFF FOGLE

Sports on TV Highlights

7:00 pm	**MLB Baseball** Philadelphia Phillies vs. New York Mets	Sports PHILADELPHIA
7:00 pm	**NHL Hockey** Washington Capitals vs. Carolina Hurricanes	NBC Sports NETWORK
8:00 pm	**NBA Basketball** Milwaukee Bucks vs. Detroit Pistons	TNT
8:30 pm	**NHL Hockey** Nashville Predators vs. Dallas Stars	CNBC
10:00 pm	**MLB Baseball** New York Yankees vs. Los Angeles Angels	MLB NETWORK
10:30 pm	**NBA Basketball** Houston Rockets vs. Utah Jazz	TNT

Phillies vs. Mets betting preview

The Phillies are back on the East Coast following their series against the Rockies as they take on the Mets at Citi Field tonight.

Jake Arrieta is back on the hill for the Phillies as he'll see the Mets for the second time in less than a week. Last Wednesday, Arrieta had a strong showing at Citizens Bank against New York as he worked 8.0 innings and allowed just two earned runs on 105 pitches. Arrieta earned his third victory of the season in that one.

Overall, the Phillies righty has looked exceptionally strong out of the gate in 2019 as he has posted a 3-1 record with a 2.25 ERA, and hasn't had a game yet in which he's allowed over three earned runs.

Mets pitcher Steven Matz, Arrieta's counterpart tonight, had also been enjoying a good beginning to 2019 until last Tuesday, when the Phillies lineup went medieval on him. JT Realmuto had four RBIs, Scott Kingery belted a two-run homer and Maikel Franco blasted a three-run dinger as part of a 10-run first inning that chased Matz from the game before the sun went down.

Expect Matz to be much better tonight (how could he be any worse?) but for the Phillies to still get their runs in. In a similar disaster of a game last season in which the Mets lost to the Nationals, 25-4, Matz responded the next time out with a so-so outing in which he gave up four earned runs in 6.0 innings.

This could be a high-scoring affair as the Phillies and Mets are both in the top five in all of MLB in total runs scored this season.

The play: Phillies spread

MATT BURKE

VSiN DAILY LINE

MLB

PHILADELPHIA PHILLIES +111 VS. NY METS -121

DETROIT TIGERS +178 VS. BOSTON RED SOX -190

NY YANKEES -121 VS. LA ANGELS +111

NBA

MILWAUKEE BUCKS -9.5 VS. DETROIT PISTONS

HOUSTON ROCKETS VS. UTAH JAZZ -1.5

NHL

NASHVILLE PREDATORS 5UN VS. DALLAS STARS -135

WASH CAPITALS 5.5 OV VS. CAROLINA HURRICANES -130

McNabb gives Eagles puzzling advice on Wentz

The former Eagles QB hasn't been impressed by the 26-year-old franchise cornerstone.

JOE PANTORNO
joseph.pantorno@metro.us

As the Eagles prepare for the NFL Draft beginning this Thursday, former quarterback Donovan McNabb doled out some advice for the organization.

The problem was, it was under a bevy of hypotheticals while attempting to put even more pressure on the Eagles' current franchise quarterback, Carson Wentz.

McNabb appeared on CBS Sports Radio with Zach Gelb over the weekend to submit his two cents on Philadelphia's quarterback situation after letting Nick Foles walk in free agency to the Jacksonville Jaguars.

"I think in the next two years or so, [Wentz] needs to find a way to get out of the second round of the playoffs. What Nick Foles was able to do, take them to a Super Bowl and then possibly take them back to the NFC Championship proves that, hey, some people can get into that offense and be very successful. [Wentz] hasn't been healthy. He hasn't really proven to me, besides the year before he got hurt, in his first year, of really the MVP candidate. He needs to get back to that mode.

"I think, personally, if he can't get out of the second round in the next two, maybe three years — but really two years, to be honest with you. If he can't get out of the second round, they should look to possibly draft another quarterback, because you just don't know about his durability. Staying healthy is very key in this league. The team only goes as far as their quarterback takes them. And they put so many eggs in the basket with Carson Wentz and he has to prove that in the next two years."

Carson Wentz (left), Donovan McNabb (right). GETTY IMAGES

Can you see the steam pouring out of Eagles fans' ears yet?

Health is obviously an uncontrollable factor that would dictate if the Eagles ever moved away from Wentz. The 26-year-old has been dealing with his fair share of issues, including a torn ACL two years ago and a lingering back problem that came to light last year.

It's those injuries, though, that have withheld Wentz from even appearing in a postseason game, which makes McNabb's playoff requirements seem rather haphazard. McNabb himself made the postseason just three times in 11 seasons with the Eagles.

While Wentz played a minor role in the Eagles' postseason run last year, Philadelphia has made the playoffs in each of the last two years with him slated as the starting quarterback — even if he had to watch from the sidelines down the stretch.

He's had a much better start to his career than McNabb, too. Compare their first three years in the league and Wentz has a better completion percentage with almost 300 more passing yards, 16 more touchdowns and 12 fewer interceptions.

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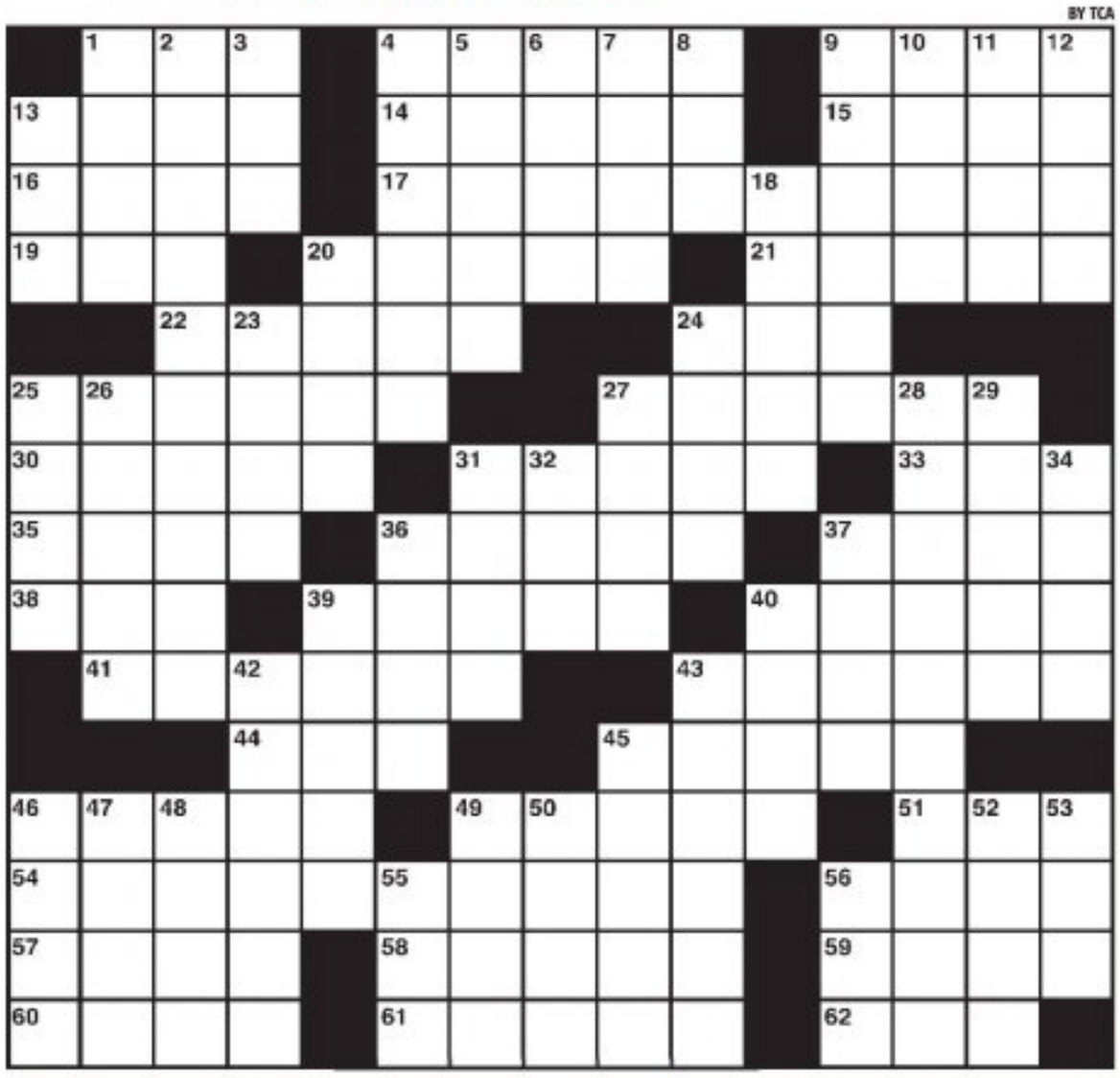

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21 Dangerous
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24 In favor of
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27 Flings
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31 Check recipient
33 Mover's truck
35 Rod and __; fishing gear
36 Piers
37 Short note
38 __ Francisco
39 Cruel man
40 Generous one
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43 Bell's middle name
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49 Street talk
51 __ de plume
54 Brilliant idea
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62 Begley & others

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4 Baseball official
5 Laughs loudly
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12 Agile
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18 Jagged
20 Facts & figures
23 British noble
24 Enemies
25 "__ is not to reason why..."
26 Tearful requests
27 Toddler
28 Fair; impartial
29 Pago Pago, American __
31 Rain heavily
32 Go on stage
34 Accepted standard
36 Carey or Barrymore
37 Complain
39 __ away; amazed
40 Controlled substance
42 Steers clear of
43 Male goose
45 Ointment
46 Capable
47 "The Old __ Mare"
48 Path
49 Lower leg part
50 Claim against property
52 Lubricates
53 TV's "Chicago __"
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